

## #14 MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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A resolution to address the mental health crisis in our communities.

***Resolved that the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island acknowledges the mental health crisis in our provinces and will work to equip our lay and clergy leaders to respond to this crisis by:***

- a. encouraging all clergy and lay leaders to take mental health first aid;***
- b. offering Mental Health First Aid (MFHA), or an equivalent program, in each region;***
- c. promoting open discussions about mental health within the church community;***
- d. creating a task group to develop liturgical resources supporting mental wellness, including a Service of Prayer for Mental Wellness in Our Communities.***

### Commentary

This resolution is crucial for the diocese because it directly addresses the mental health crisis that is impacting countless individuals within our communities. Mental health challenges, such as anxiety, depression, and trauma, are prevalent in society, and many members of the diocese are certainly facing such struggles. By equipping clergy and lay leaders with the tools and knowledge to respond effectively to mental health concerns, the diocese strengthens its pastoral care and enhances its ability to nurture the spiritual and emotional well-being of its community.

Mental health is an integral aspect of human well-being, and by addressing it within the church, the diocese fosters a culture of acceptance, support, and understanding. This will help ensure that all members, especially those facing mental health challenges, feel valued, cared for, and empowered to seek help. The Church's role in offering a safe and compassionate space for all aspects of life—physical, emotional, and spiritual—is essential to creating a holistic faith community. It also reinforces the core Christian values of love, compassion, and healing, aligning with the Church's mission to care for all of God's people.

The impact of this resolution would be transformative. Clergy and lay leaders who would become trained in mental health first aid would become better equipped to recognize and respond to mental health issues within their congregations. This would result in more compassionate, effective, timely interventions, as well as an overall church environment where individuals feel more comfortable discussing their struggles with mental wellness without fear of judgment. By normalizing conversations around mental health, the diocese would help break down the stigma surrounding mental health, fostering an atmosphere of empathy and understanding.

The introduction of liturgical resources for mental wellness would be a powerful tool in providing a spiritual and emotional outlet for individuals who are struggling, allowing them to engage with their faith in a way that acknowledges and validates their mental health challenges. This resolution would lead to a more compassionate, supportive, and cohesive community where people know they are not alone in their struggles and where they have access to resources to help them navigate their mental health journey.

A future where this resolution is fully implemented would see this as a diocese where mental health is treated as a priority, equally important to physical health, within the church community. Clergy and laity would be better prepared to address mental health concerns, both in themselves and in others, and the church would be a trusted resource for mental wellness support. Parishes would have trained leaders who could offer guidance, referrals, and pastoral and emotional support to individuals struggling with mental health challenges.

Church services and events would be more inclusive of mental health issues, ensuring that no one feels excluded or isolated because of their mental health status. In this future, the diocese would become a model for other faith communities in how to integrate awareness of mental wellness into spiritual practices and church life. Mental wellness would be woven into the fabric of the church's pastoral care and outreach programs. Furthermore, the diocese would continually assess its mental health initiatives, ensuring that they evolve to meet the changing needs of its community, ensuring long-term sustainability. Ultimately, this future would lead to a church community where all individuals, regardless of their mental health status, can find healing, understanding, and wholeness in both their faith and their lives.